

indictment there is no reply. His fundamental error was in not purchasing Germany's assent to French aims in Morocco. The good will of Italy had been bought by recognition of her claim to Tripoli, that of England by assent to her position in Egypt, that of Spain by the hypothetical reversion of the Mediterranean coast. It has been argued that since Germany was not a Mediterranean Power there was no obligation to consult her. Yet she possessed treaty rights under the Madrid Convention of 1880 and under a separate commercial pact with Fez; her trade was rapidly increasing and her readiness to take offence was notorious. It was not only socialist critics like Jaurès who pointed out the dangers of his policy. "By incredible blindness," wrote René Millet, an ex-Governor of Tunis, "the Government took precautions with everybody except the only one of its neighbours whom it had serious cause to fear."

Despite the provocation to which it was a reply, the Tangier demonstration proved a blunder, for the limited obligation of diplomatic support involved in the Anglo-French treaty of 1904 was transformed, in fact though not in name, into a general understanding. Germany was no less excited than France, and the Kaiser delivered a series of ominous speeches on the western frontier. "I hope peace will not be broken," he declared at Karlsruhe on April 27. "I hope the events now in progress will keep the attention of our nation awake and strengthen its courage. I hope we shall find ourselves united if it becomes necessary to intervene in world politics." * * Similar warnings were uttered elsewhere in the Rhineland. For the first time since 1891 the German sword began to rattle loudly in its scabbard.

On April 22 Billow, in a circular despatch, defined and

defended his new policy. The Morocco treaty, he complained, was never communicated to the German Government. Yet Germany had not moved, since the treaty recognized the status quo, and he therefore assumed that France would consult the Powers if she aimed at changes limiting their rights. "It was necessary to act when the Sultan asked us if France was in truth t^e malidatory of the Powers, when we learned of parts of the programme, and when great papers pointed to Tunis-as a model." A conference, he concluded, was the best solution, since Germany sought no privileges by separate agreement, and her interests were identical with those of other Powers. Meanwhile a German envoy had been despatched to